2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

782 796 the shrine. When the millet is cut everyone brings a portion to the *bareth Nyakang*. This is ground and made into porridge with water brought from the river; some is poured out at the threshold of the hut regarded as specially sacred to Nyakang, and some on the ground within the hut, the outside of which is also anointed with the mixture. Until this has been done no one may eat of the new crop.

643 782 There is a ceremony at the accession of each king, when the newly consecrated ruler should send cattle to each shrine of Nyakang, and also presents of spears and other valuable objects, such as ostrich eggs and elephant tusks. Some of the beasts are sacrificed outside the enclosure, others are added to the herd belonging to the shrine. We have no information concerning the details of this ceremony, but we do not doubt that the flesh of the slaughtered beasts is eaten by the *bareth*.

755 782 When a man is sick he may bring or send a sheep to the nearest shrine of Nyakang, where the attendants sprinkle it with water and spear it. They pray for the sick man, who eats a part of the flesh of the sheep or drinks some of the water in which the meat has been boiled. The rest of the sheep is eaten by the guardians of the shrine and their friends without any ceremony, but the bones and perhaps the intestines are thrown into the river.

782 796 We add an account of a ceremony that took place on 9th December, 1921, at which we were present, premising that our notes were made after, not during, the ceremony and are certainly incomplete :—

[114] When we reached Fenikang at the end of November, 1921, the shrine of Nyakang was being prepared for a ceremony, having for its object the saving of the millet from attacks by flocks of innumerable small birds. A band of women, perhaps as many as forty, had started to clear the area round the shrine, pulling up every weed and blade of grass. Often they would sing, keeping time by clapping their hands; or they would get up and dance slowly round the outside fence of the shrine, and then sitting down would chant another song, occasionally breaking out into cries resembling the Arab *zagharit*. [574] Some of the women were visitors to Fenikang; unfortunately we did not discover whether they had come specially for this purpose, or to which clans they belonged. For the next few days there were always a few women at work weeding, plastering mud, painting the walls, and generally tidying the shrine, or bringing in baskets of sand from outside for the floor of the enclosure.

Although the time was undoubtedly due for the ceremony its

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

428 The sons inherit the property of their father. The wives of the deceased INHERITANCE
587 father are divided among the children, who may, and in most cases do, marry
763 them, except their own mother. It is said that sometimes, when a husband is very old and infirm, his wives put him to death, in order to get a younger companion. On inheritance vide page 113.

517 Their chief amusement is dancing. The houses of a village are built in a DANCING AND
[361] circle, leaving an open place in their midst. Here the inhabitants assemble in WAR-PLAYS
the evening, stretching themselves in the warm ashes or on a skin, or squatting
[237] on a piece of ambach; several small fires of cow dung are burning and spread
[325] a smoke of strong smell, which is the best protection from mosquito-stings.
75[] The events of the day are discussed here, the tobacco pipe and merisa pot going from hand to hand. In the middle of this open place the trunk of a large
[20?] tree is erected, in which the drums are suspended. With them signals are given in times of danger, but more frequently they are used to accompany the dances of the young people. These public dances are among the greatest events
535 in the lives of the young Shilluks; even old men and women, though not taking an active part, are highly interested in them; sitting before the huts in front of the dancers they constitute a chorus, who accompanies the transactions of the younger generation with loud acclamations or blamings. The dances generally take place during the dry season; they begin at about four o'clock in the afternoon, or, in case there is moonshine, later in the evening, and last from
[574] three to five hours or longer. As a rule one village invites its neighbours by a drum signal given in the early morning of the day fixed for a dance. On hearing this signal the young people show a great zeal in preparing their body, hairdress and the ornaments worn on the occasion. They go to the village in groups or single, men and girls separately. Usually the youths perform some war-dance in full arms at first, in which the girls do not partake; they form a large circle in four or two rows, and while the drum is being beaten, begin dancing and singing war songs. The dance consists in jumping on the toe and at the same time moving slowly forward. These rhythmical movements are from time to time interrupted by a group of dancers violently rushing out of the circle, howling and shouting aloud, brandishing their spears with fierce looks, and performing mock fights or playing pantomimes, in which they exhibit very remarkable ability. Scenes from the hunting, pastoral and agricultural life are represented with such a dramatic vivacity that they richly deserve the applause they earn.

On a given signal, spears, clubs and shields are laid aside and put together in one place, and now the second part, in which the girls partake, begins. The latter have till then been waiting in a separate place, where the female lookers-on are gathered. Each girl selects her own dancer. First the men form again a

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

retreat. Around our house they went in a regular stampede, and forming in a line again in front of the house for another charge.
This they repeated a number of times. Then a crowd of women, who had followed their husbands and sweethearts to battle, acted the part of foe, only to be overcome by the brave warriors and driven back. This part was very amusing. One old body with great bravery marched out and charged, using her pipe as her weapon. The men were a bit rough in driving her back, and she was evidently afraid her dear pipe would come to grief, so she took it inside our house and when next we saw her she was in the thick of a fray with a long weed as her weapon of offence and defence".]

The dry season is also the time for travelling. Relatives pay mutual visits, and marriageable young men go to the Nuers and Dinkas with spears, wire, stuffs, and durra, which they exchange for sheep and calves.

IV. RELIGION.

In the religion of the Shilluks three components are clearly distinguishable: 1. Jwok (*jwɔ̀k*) or God; 2. Nyikang (*Ńɟìkàŋ̀*), the progenitor and national hero of the Shilluks; 3. ajwogo (*àjwɔ̀gɔ́*), the witch doctor or sorcerer. These three do not exist separate from each other, but have many relations amongst one another. There are still other forms of religious service, but they are not so prominent as the three mentioned.

"Jwok (*jwɔ̀k*) is a supreme being, residing above". Whether he is regarded as creator is not sure. According to the sayings of some natives he surely is, but it seems probable that this belief, if there is such a one, is young, and must be traced back to Mohammedan or Christian influences. — On certain occasions an ox is killed as a sacrifice to Jwok, though this is done more frequently to Nyikang; prayers are also offered to Jwok, but according to my information, they have only one prayer to Jwok (for which vide page 171), while to Nyikang there are many. "Praying" to Jwok is expressed by a different word from that which serves for designating a prayer to Nyikang; the first is *lɔ̄mɛ* "to pray"; its original meaning is probably: to conjure. In praying to Nyikang *kwɔɔcàg* "to ask for, to beg" is used. While the prayers to Nyikang are sung, and accompanied by dances, that one to Jwok is only spoken, not sung, and not accompanied by dancing. Jwok has no visible symbols or temples, nor are the prayers to him offered by a priest or sorcerer, but by the chief or village-elder.

In the heart and mind of the Shilluk Jwok does not possess a deep-rooted rank. In some way they do attribute good and evil to him, and chiefly the

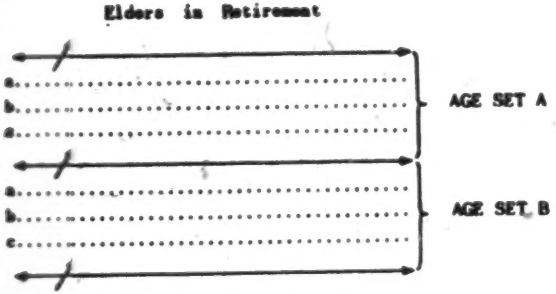
*539 *wu kɛ́ŋ? wó kò: wa kɛ̰la fōɛ Chółò! Kine: wich apǫ́ŋǫ? Kine: wa chaka ńeau wǫ byɛ́l. Kine: bɨ́h, a ɛ̰̄ wun yi kɛch? E ko: kɛ̰u lwak! Ka wǫ kɛ̰la lwak, ka oŋ́wǫk kɛ̰̀l, ka nɛ̰̀k, ká châm yi wǫ́n; ka chak kɛ̰̀l, ka wǫ châmò, ka ńygé a kɛ̰le wǫn, ńeau ki byɛ́l. Ka wǫ bɛ̰̄nǫ, ka kɛ̰ti yi yɛ̰̄t, ka wǫ bɛ̰̄nǫ, ka ygi mákè yì pàr, ka ygi mudǫ, ka wǫ kwāāŋǫ wǫk; a bɛ̰̀nà, a tɛ̰̄na Ńebɛ̰̀dò, a bɛ̰̄na pach, a bɛ̰̄na Penidwai; kɛ̰ch kɛ̰ch!*

We travelled to *Tonga* and from there came into the Nuer-country; we were travelling on some river, whose name is *Ńeygrǫ*. We came to Teryau, there we landed; we roasted fish. We went and turned to the home of the king, whose name was *Pɛ̨dō*. We turned towards the cow-house. He asked us, "You Shilluk children, where do you come from?" We answered, "We come from the Shilluk-country." He asked, "What for?" We replied, "We want to buy dura." He said, "Why, are you suffering ("dying") from hunger?" Then he said, "Go into the cow-house!"[1] So we went into the cow-house. A ram was brought and killed, and was eaten by us; and milk was brought, and we ate. Then we brought forth money to buy dura. (After we had bought it and brought it into our boats) we went into the boats and returned home. But one boat was seized by a hippo, it sank, and we swam to the bank. So I came home turning towards *Ńebɛ̰̄dǫ*, I came home to *Penidwai*; the famine was very great.

[574]

[1] the cow house serves as a residence for guests.

thus occurs periodically. The subdivisions of any age set are known as 561
'head', 'neck' and 'middle'.



..... Subdivisions in formation.

As new subdivisions are continually being formed by initiated youths the immediate age set into which they enter grows too large. In addition the oldest subdivisions of the age set, comprising the married men and fathers, begin to die out or are ready for retirement. A new grouping of all the subdivisions is achieved by the *ngol* or cutting ceremony, when age sets are ceremonially divided into distinct units. The process is shown in the diagram. Surviving members of age set A (the older subdivisions) pass completely out of the age organisation into retirement. Older subdivisions of age set B pass into age set A to replace those retiring, while the most recently formed subdivisions pass for the first time into age set B. Thus, room is made for the formation of new subdivisions and there is a moving of subdivisions through the age sets or the formation of newly constituted age sets.

The retired age sets take no part in fighting or in ceremonies connected with the age-set organisation. The reshuffling occurs at the induction of the very young subdivisions, the members of which are anxious to have further privileges and a higher status. On ceremonial occasions the age sets have special parts of the animals killed, the highest age set eats the back and chest, the lower will eat the hump and legs only. According to Howell the regrouping of subdivisions is often the subject of much dispute, particularly between the two subdivisions which will be separated by the new line of division.

There are few occasions when the age set functions. At funerals the men are organised according to age sets as also at beer feasts when each sits in a special place and sings its own song. 1764 504

Age sets emphasize the solidarity of the settlement by organising the generations within it. Each settlement unit has its own age-set organisation and there is no connection between the age sets of different settlements, though they all have similar forms and play similar parts in the settlement units. The age sets have little political importance, save that they constitute a bond of unity within the settlement, and this is clear 182 561 621

the more distant settlements, owing to the length of the populated area, is not very much shorter. Most parts of Shilluk country are accessible to the inhabitants even when the water-courses and swamps are full, but travelling is not easy and social contact consequently less frequent in the rainy season. The result of such periodic inconvenience of communication and the length of inhabited country are twofold. In the first place, in the past at anyrate, the immediate power of the central authority the *Reth*, was slightly diminished and he was more dependent on the loyalty and competence of the settlement chiefs. Second, difficulty of communication increases the isolation of the settlement and intensifies the feeling of unity within it. Moreover, the clan, having no territorial basis, is put to a further disadvantage. The settlement thus gains importance socially, economically and politically in the structure of the tribe.

The formation of the settlement is based on a particular association of lineages and its structure can only be understood after a searching examination of their position. The fission of clan segments, individual enterprise and migration has been frequent for a very long period of Shilluk history. In each settlement there are therefore both indigenous elements and newcomers. Mr. Pumphrey has explained in outline the position and significance of the *Dyil*.[1] They are fundamentally associated with the land they occupy, and theoretically they enjoy great prestige and authority. Among most primitive peoples the fixation of sentiment on land is bound up with human interests and those who are more closely bound to it acquire special functions and prerogatives not accorded to newcomers. Besides their ritual association with the land, the *Dyil* have obligations and observances of primary importance in the social machinery of their settlement and they form the centre round which internal political activities revolve. Subsequent accretions known in Shilluk as *Wedh* normally hold a position of political subservience to the *Dyil*. It must be emphasised here, that this implies no social inferiority; it merely means that the *Dyil* are expected to take the lead in matters of importance to all inhabitants of the settlement. The *Jago* is usually the chosen representative of the *Dyil* lineage and holds the *Law Dwong* of office Mr. Pumphrey has pointed out that

[1] Dyil are the descendants of the people who originally received grants of land from Nyikang. - Analyst

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

joined, whatever the new formation may be. The regrouping of sub-divisions is often the subject of heated controversy, particularly between the two sub-divisions who will be separated by the new line of distinction. It is apparently preferable to remain the highest sub-division of the newly formed lower age-set and thereby acquire special privileges and duties. At the last *Ngol* ceremony held in the settlement of *Yom Dok Alal*, the two sub-divisions between whom the distinction was to be made actually came to blows. The age-set A, having retired, participates no longer in warfare nor in the ceremonies associated with the organization.

The sub-divisions of any age-set are known in Shilluk as "head," "neck" and "middle" respectively. Thus while the "head," "neck" and "middle" sub-divisions of B occupy the same position in a new status, the two or three sub-divisions below them are "head," "neck" and "middle" of C. On ceremonial occasions when the age-sets function as such, the highest age-set is privileged to eat the back and chest of any animal provided, while the lower will eat of the hump and legs only. This division of meat is rigidly observed and any infringment is severely punished. This rule is particularly enforced at the *Ngol* when a bull is slaughtered and ceremonially divided and eaten—to emphasise the newly acquired privileges of the age-set in the higher status.

After this the newly appointed *Bañ* who will be war-leader of the senior age-set, is formally elected and is carried jubilantly round the settlement on the shoulders of his age-mates. Frequently this procession enters the territory of another settlement, the boasts of the younger warriors bring out the young men of the neighbouring district, and fighting occurs.

The *Bañ* has no administrative or political functions and has no connection with the *Jago* of the settlement. It is his duty to organize mobilization and to preside at communal feasts at which the age-sets assemble. According to some informants he is assisted in the cultivation of his fields by his age-mates.

After the ceremony is over, each age-set is given a new name, usually taken from some current event or from the colour of the bull

535 leave the dancing ground. Within a few minutes the village is clear
881 of all guests, those who are unable to stand being swept along in the rush.

Before dancing for the first time the initiate is usually presented
881 with two spears by his father. The sons of rich men are presented
431 with a bull (*Walk Owono*) as well.[8] This bull is treated with great care
[553] and affection by the young warrior and he is given a new name by his age-mates—taken from the colour of the bull and they alone may call him so. Theoretically the bull is kept throughout his life, a new
[583] one of similar colour and markings being substituted when it dies. It is never given as bride-wealth. The initiates then visit their relatives
881 in the settlement and after a short period of travel return home. In
574 the past these visits were probably on a wider scale and according to Hofmayer "after the dance it is the custom for the Shilluk initiates
[114 171] to lead a nomadic life for a time, traversing the country from one end to the other." This statement is probably an exaggeration, but a period of wandering visits is common among African peoples before final reintegration into the community in adult status.

At the *Cong Bul*, initiates are introduced to their new privileges
535 764 together, but the rest of the warriors are not drawn up in age-sets. At the "*Kwogo*" and "*Yok*," which are funeral ceremonies, the male
881 561 Shilluk are organized according to their respective age-sets. There are few other occasions when the age-set system functions at all.

476 Among the Shilluk the more arduous processes of cultivation are
561 carried out communally. A man will invite his neighbours and relatives to help him in his fields and will provide merissa for them afterwards. The helpers are not necessarily his age-mates and it does not appear

[178] 8. The Shilluk say that the custom is dying out and that few fathers have bulls to spare. In any case the youth will take the name of one of his father's bulls. The *Walk Owono* is a source of great pride to its owner and songs are composed about it which are sung for the benefit of girls.

An approximate translation of the song of Ajak, an inhabitant of the Zeraf mouth is as follows:

"I have a grey bull, a great bull,
I am going to Golbaign to buy a bell,
A bell for the bull that lives in
My fathers byre."

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

476 561 to be their duty to aid him. The arrangement is merely reciprocal. At the beer feast afterwards, however, the guests are arranged according 476 to their respective sub-divisions. The two senior sub-divisions present 561 enter the hut of their host before the others and it is their privilege 574 to taste the beer first and approve it. They remain in the hut for sometime for they have had an exhausting day in the fields and are thirsty. Outside the hut in the courtyard are grouped the lower sub-divisions, eagerly awaiting their share which is passed out to them when those inside are satisfied with the quality of the beer. Possibly another sub-division is then allowed to enter the hut if there is room at the back.

The sub-divisions are grouped inside the hut in ascending order of seniority and the leader of the senior sub-division present, (*Pagy*) [264] sits near the door. The *Pagy* has a special gourd which is kept full of beer by the man next him. Etiquette is rigidly observed and every-[562] one is careful to sit in the right place and take his turn at the beer. [533] No women are present except the host's wife or wives who sit at the back and serve the beer. Every age-set has its own song and this is sung by those inside the hut while the young men outside take up the chorus.

The existence within the settlement of organized age-sets limited 561 by territorial boundaries is a factor which should ensure co-ordination 571 and peace between the different lineages. The Shilluk say that age-578 mates will not fight each other. In fact this is an exaggeration for the sense of loyalty and mutual obligation between age-mates is not constant or strong. The reason for this is the rarity of occasions in which the age-set organization functions to-day and the very limited purpose to which it is put. In reality, mutual ties and observances practiced by age-mates are quite outside the deeper and more permanent ties of kinship and the Shilluk is not bothered by perpetually conflicting emotions. The age-sets do not operate as such until all lineages are bound together by a common cause apart from and in a different context to internal bickerings which are not infrequent.

Political authority is not now derived from the age-set system, 554 but from the powerful position in the settlement of the dominant lineage. 613 621

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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As Nyikang proceeds with Dak one on beside him, the escort chants
643 778 [533] the songs of Nyikang and Dak recounting their exploits of conquest. From time to time Nyikang turns round and dances back as if to threaten those following. When he does this, Dak rushes ahead, carried in a charging position, his body held horizontally pointed like a spear, and Nyikang himself is carried 'at the slope'. The place where Nyikang spends the night is unpredictable. He does not move much after sunset, and normally spends the night in a shrine.

[417] Nyikang was observed at rest at Moro, the northern limit of his progress, obviously propped up upon his "bed", a long forked stick with a leather flap hanging from the fork. He was inside the fence of the large shrine, and outside under three large *heglig* trees, sacred to Nyikang, the people of Moro and the Kwanyikwom were dancing in his honour.

[536] The dancing at Moro was of a usual type. The dancers dancing in an anti-clockwise direction around the drums of Nyikang. The [533] burden of most of the songs was the conquest of the "Funy" and their ejection from Shilluk country. It was thought that Nyikang would stay two nights at Moro, but he was late and in a hurry. He left that same afternoon and returned to Akurwa on the 28th. On the 29th he started for Fashoda.

Nyikang was next observed at Golbainy south of Kodok on the 6th March. (He is said to have stayed in the following places—1.3.44 Nun, 2.3.44 Adod Thuro, 3.3.44 Athodwoi, 4.3.44 Detwok (Pabiu), 5.3.44 Kodok (Nimmal).) When Nyikang spends the night at a village, [574] the houses must be vacated by the villagers for the Kwanyikwom, who have also a right to be fed.

On the 6th March Nyikang arrived before midday at the village of *reth* Fafiti in Golbainy, where he spent the heat of the day. We arrived shortly after Nyikang and observed that he had been put into one of *reth* Fafiti's houses (not the tomb). There were dances around
533 the big *heglig* tree in the village similar to the dances at Moro. A large
535 contingent of female *bangreth* were the most obvious element led by
643 the senior *bareth*. The little drums of Nyikang were beaten under

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the place very inviting, or, if one must enter, tempt one to linger. One is happy to conclude's one's business and escape to the comfort of the hut opposite.

This is the living and sleeping hut, and is usually much more clean and tidy than the other. The hard earth floor is neatly smoothed over with mud and carefully swept. Several cow hides hang on the walls or rest against them, and one of these is placed for the visitor to sit upon crosslegged, or a small platform made of light ambac wood may be brought forward for his accommodation. Lying against the wall is also the tall war shield of toughened hippopotamus hide belonging to the master of the house and his two spears, one his fighting spear, seven feet in length with a broad, smooth, highly polished, leaf-shaped blade on a straight, slender shaft of brown wood; the other his fishing spear, a foot shorter in length and with a long, narrow, triangular blade armed with ugly, serrated barbs. Inside the hut we may find several men; some sit in the neat way the Shilluk have with one foot tucked beneath them, a posture impossible for a stiff-jointed European, but one which they can maintain for long periods without the slightest discomfort. The host is dispensing beer to his guests from a large pot placed in the centre of the floor, and a generous bowl, holding about a quart, will be offered to you. This beer is made from fermented millet, and looks, and tastes, rather like cold cocoa. Courtesy demands that you take some, so you sip a little slowly, balance the bowl in your lap for a while, take another small drink and hand the bowl to your neighbour who finishes it off with avidity. You linger over a cigarette while the others pass round a pipe filled with rank, home-grown tobacco, or, if this is scarce, with charcoal. A Shilluk pipe has a large bowl made of clay, fire baked, fancifully carved and picked out in red and white and black; into this is fitted a wooden stem, two feet long and an inch in diameter, with a bulbous mouthpiece made from the stem of a gourd. With a complete disregard for hygiene a member of the party takes the pipe from the man next to him, puts it to his mouth, sucks vigorously for a few moments, his cheeks going in and out

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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574 [276] like bellows, and then passes it on. Pipe and beer circulate freely, and under the mellowing influence of both, tongues are quickly loosened and conversation turns to the perennial [521] topic of cattle. After a while, your cigarette finished, you will excuse yourself to your host and, rising from your cramped position, greet everyone present in turn and make your escape into the open air.

512 The Shilluk, sensible man, starts his day with the sun. He emerges from his hut, however, with heavy head and blood- [513] shot eyes, since he has been sleeping for seven or eight hours in a small windowless hut with the doorway blocked with a [372] heavy grass mat and perhaps a smoky fire burning as a [825] protection against mosquitoes. As a further defence against [751] these pests he covers himself from head to foot with the red ashes from the cow-dung fire, but this does not worry him; [515] if there is water handy he may rinse his hands and face, if not, he will remain as he is until his next visit to the river —perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow or the next day—gives him the chance of taking a bath.

Gradually the village comes to life: the women appear, winding their drab-looking cloths round them, and set off [484] on their daily pilgrimage to the river with the heavy water pots balanced on their heads. The little group breaks up and the women fall into line, one behind the other, as they reach the narrow track leading out of the village, chattering like starlings as they swing along. The boys come out of the 512 byre smothered like their elders in the red ashes in which 857 they have been lying all night, looking like imps from the [233] lower regions. They begin to clean up round the tethered [372] cattle, collecting the cow dung and spreading it out to [234] dry in the sun for fuel. When this is done they milk the [252] cows and goats. From one compound comes the sound of dull thumping as some girl pounds the millet grain into coarse flour. The grain is small and hard, red or white in colour. It is first winnowed by being poured at shoulder height from a basket and then sieved in a boat- [415] shaped scoop of plaited fibre. The grain is then put into a

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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and the bamboo socket into which it is fitted is shorter and thicker. Behind the effigies are carried Nyikang's 'bed', a long forked stick upon which he is propped at night and a basket of food for his refreshment during the journey. The bearers are surrounded by men of the same clan whose duty it is to keep spectators at a distance, and behind follow Shilluk from the district into which the procession has entered, who act as an escort as far as the next section. The march is kept up at a good pace to the accompaniment of songs sung in honour of Nyikang and Dak. At sunset a halt is made at the nearest large village. Nyikang and Dak are put away for the night, Nyikang being propped up on his 'bed' so that he doesn't touch the ground. His bearers and escort are accommodated in the village, huts being evacuated to receive them and food prepared for them. The next morning the march is resumed, the people flocking to the road from all sides to pay homage to their hero-king as he passes by and joining in the unceasing chants of praise in his honour. Eventually, after some five days on the road, the environments of Fashoda are reached. A village, Adodo, has been set aside for Nyikang and his followers, and they rest there until the day appointed for the installation, about three days hence. During all this time the reth-elect has remained in Fashoda, but when he is informed that Nyikang has arrived at Adodo, he moves away from the capital and takes up his residence at Debalo, a few miles to the south. Nyikang is, as it were, in rightful possession of the territory, and the king-to-be is in the position of an intruder until he has proved his fitness to rule.

Between Fashoda and Debalo lies a long narrow water course, Khor Arepejur. This khor is the traditional boundary fixed by Nyikang himself, between the north and the south. On the morning of the first day of the installation ceremonies, the reth-elect and his followers march towards the khor, the reth leading by the hand a little girl who is his 'bride' and who later will be the cause of a dispute between Nyikang and himself. Arrived at the khor the reth finds stretched out across his path a black bull, over which he steps. (Formerly

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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dowry. The models are hung up in front of the hut and the ceremony is concluded with beer-drinking.

About a month later the child may be taken home to be shown to its father. The mother carrying the infant is accompanied by three or four girl friends and the old woman who attended her at the confinement. The father and his male relatives and friends inspect the baby outside the hut to satisfy themselves that it shows no deformity or any other abnormality. If such unhappily were the case, the child would be enclosed together with a live sheep in a basket and thrown into the Nile. When the father is satisfied that the child is normal, a goat or sheep is killed, the meat eaten at the ensuing feast and the skin scraped and softened to serve as a sleeping mat for the baby. Beer is prepared and the whole village invited to come to the party. Those who come, however, are expected to bring some small gifts of money, beads, bracelets and the like. These are the perquisites of the midwife, the beer makers and the girls who escorted the mother and child back to her home.

There are no special ceremonies for the birth of children after the first born, and the mother may or may not return to her father's village for her confinements as she pleases. There is however a little feast to celebrate the birth and, as before, a sheep or goat is killed and the skin used as the infant's sleeping mat.

During a woman's pregnancy neither she nor her husband is permitted to visit anyone who is sick. They are considered to be unlucky and their visit to a sick person would surely result in his death. The most that is allowed is that they may stand at the fence surrounding the house where the sick person is and enquire after him.

With reference to the custom of the young wife leaving her husband's home for her father's for the birth of her first child, it must be mentioned that the wives of the king, not merely on the occasion of their first born, but for all subsequent confinements, must leave Fashoda. They do not go to their former home, however, but to the village of some chief at a considerable distance from the capital. The child that is

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

731 widespread, few have a sufficiency and fewer have any to spare for sale. Then the plight of the Shilluk is pitiful indeed.

Such a disaster occurred in 1945. The rains were sparse all over the country and failed almost entirely in the Upper Nile Province. In the Detwok area, after a promising start a prolonged drought set in and the young shoots withered and died. Hope revived when a heavy downpour of rain broke the drought and the people went out to plant again. But this second planting suffered the same fate as the first and as one scorching day followed another during the remainder of what was supposed to be the rainy season expectation slowly died, together with the wilting crops. The ruin was complete and, as we soon learned, was confined not merely to our own area or even to the Upper Nile but was general throughout the country.

797 731 461 In Detwok we were planning to open a Central School the following year and consequently had in hand a larger building programme than usual. The famine assured us of no scarcity of labour. Usually even though the crops are meagre there is no shortage in the months immediately following the harvest, and the Shilluk, careless for the future, gives himself over to the enjoyment of the fruits of his industry. Much of his precious grain is converted into beer [574] [585] and he dispenses and receives lavish hospitality at the many village dances with which the Shilluk celebrates the harvest. Not unnaturally the proposal that he should spend the next few months digging foundations or brickmaking or carrying water is received with a marked lack of enthusiasm, and we usually depend for our labour upon those improvident bachelors who have not bothered about a cultivation and who moreover are faced with the necessity of raising money to pay the annual poll tax.

731 797 466 This year, however, there was no need to be anxious about a shortage of workmen. Each Monday when the labourers were hired for the week the mission was besieged from before dawn by hundreds of men and women begging for a chance to be able to earn a few shillings. We were able to employ only a fraction of this crowd, and it was a thankless and an